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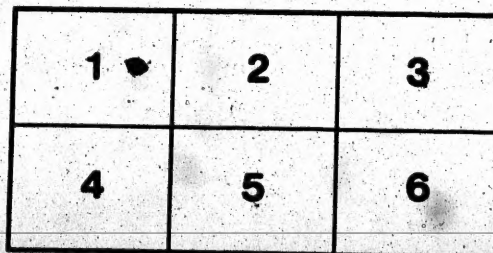
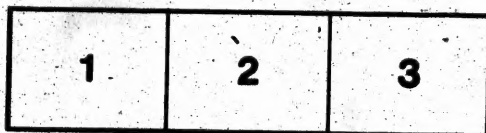
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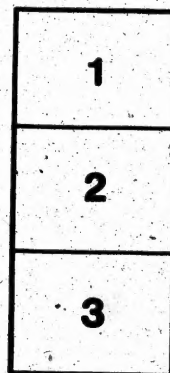
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Montreal
ACCOUNT OF THE PROCEEDINGS
AT
LAYING THE CORNER STONE,
OF THE FIRST
German Evangelical Church,
AT MONTREAL, C. E.,
ON
THURSDAY, APRIL 22nd, 1858.

MONTREAL:
PRINTED BY J. C. BECKET, 38, GREAT ST. JAMES STREET.

1858.

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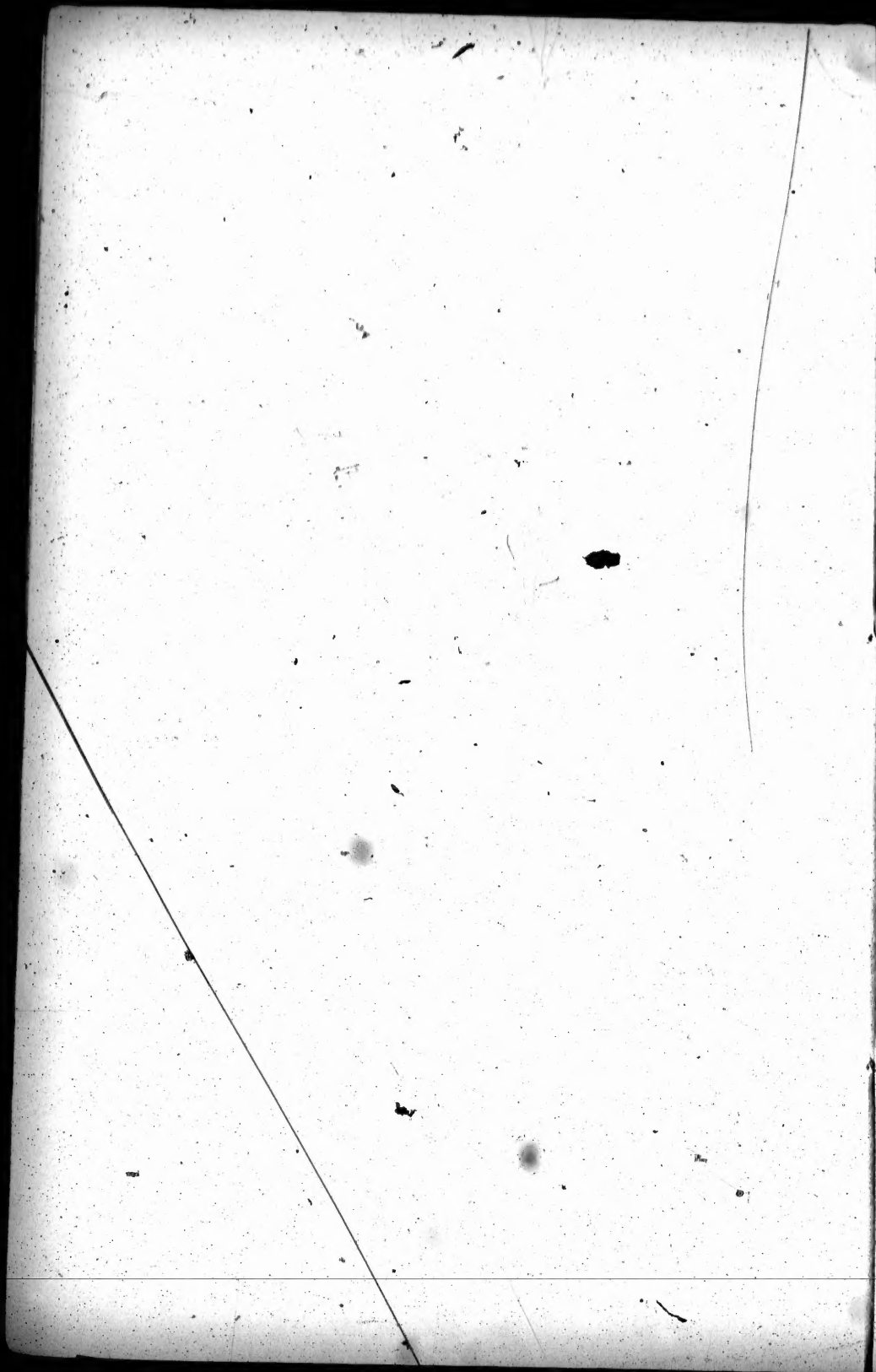
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PREFACE & APPEAL.

The following account of the proceedings at laying the corner stone of a German Evangelical Church, in this City, has been reprinted (with some additions) from the Montreal newspapers, chiefly with a view to circulation amongst our friends of the different English congregations who have manifested so kindly an interest in the success of our undertaking.

We are particularly desirous of acting on the friendly and judicious advice of the Rev. Mr. Kemp, by making every effort in our power to have our Church opened free of debt. But if this desirable object be anywise attainable, it is alas! not by such sacrifices as lie within the reach of our own little community, but can only be accomplished through the generosity of such of our fellow-Christians as God has seen fit to place in easier worldly circumstances; and to their pious liberality we would therefore make our humble appeal.

Compared with the other churches of this city, the German congregation is, and in the natural course of things is likely to remain, a poor one. The great majority of its members are likely to be composed of a class of immigrants who bring little wealth along with them, and of their descendants of the first generation. Of the latter, too, it is probable that many may cease to be connected with us after the period of early youth. Increasing familiarity with the English language, the ties of new family alliances, and the ever growing consciousness of a Canadian nationality, will favor their absorption into some or other of those congregations, from which our present barrier of partition is not faith, not baptism, scarcely any longer nation, but almost solely tongue; and we would venture to appeal, not only to the Christian benevolence, but also to the enlightened patriotism of our fellow-subjects of Queen Victoria, whether it be not an object worthy of their hearty co-operation, to endeavour that, through the Divine blessing, children that seem destined one day to form a portion of the industrious population of this flourishing city, should be trained up in the knowledge and reverence of God's word and ordinances under an evangelical ministry, rather than be abandoned to a state of practical heathenism, or to the proselytizing zeal of a church against which their forefathers were the first to set the example of protesting.



LAYING THE CORNER STONE
OF THE
New German Evangelical Church,
AT MONTREAL.

This interesting ceremony was performed on the afternoon of Thursday, April 22d, by the Rev. Mr. Werner, minister of the German Evangelical Protestants.

About half-past two o'clock, a procession was formed at the Gabriel street Church ; it was chiefly composed of the German congregation of this city, and was accompanied by their Pastor, Rev. Mr. Werner, who walked between his Worship the Mayor and the Rev. Mr. Kemp. The Rev. Dr. Wilkes and the Rev. Mr. Bonar were also present.

The procession began to move about three o'clock ; the junior members of the German congregation in front, and the adults, with their pastor, who was dressed in his clerical robes, bringing up the rear, along with his Worship the Mayor, Rev. Mr. Kemp, Dr. Wilkes and Rev. Mr. Bonar.

The procession, as it passed through Craig and Dominique streets, presented a remarkably interesting appearance. When it had arrived at the corner of Dominique and Dorchester streets, where the new German Church, a neat and substantial edifice, is in the course of construction, it halted. The Rev. Mr. Werner, the Mayor, and the Rev. Messrs. Bonar and Kemp, together with Dr. Wilkes, ascended the edifice, where a considerable number of ladies were awaiting their arrival.

The stone was in its position ready to be laid ; and a tin case, containing the name of the Sovereign, the name of the Governor-General, etc., was ready to be deposited in a cavity prepared for it in the stone, which was about to be placed on the eastern corner of the building.

The speakers took their places on an elevation in the vicinity ; and the space within the building having been speedily filled by the members of the German Congregation, and the public :—

Mr. A. Schmidt made the following remarks :—

CHRISTIAN FRIENDS,—I have been requested on behalf of the Trustees of the German Evangelical Church, to make a few introductory observations before proceeding with the laying of the Corner Stone. I much regret that the choice has not fallen upon one better able to do justice to this office. I shall, however, be very brief, con-

fining myself to such remarks as are intimately connected with, and I may say, form the short history of our Church.

Several fruitless attempts at different times have been made to establish a German Mission in this city. This object, so grave and all important, was again brought up for discussion among the German Protestants of this city in the fall of the year 1853. Every one of them, and even those who had almost spent their whole life in this city, and amalgamated themselves with established Churches, felt that never disappearing desire to listen again to the word of our Lord preached in their own sweet mother tongue, as they had been accustomed to in their dear old fatherland. But they had not only their self-interest in view, they considered themselves in duty bound, to lend their hand in providing for those new arriving German Protestants, who, ignorant of the English language, were thus unfortunately deprived of those blessings, which the attendance of divine worship when entered into with the right spirit, always more or less produce. In consideration of these circumstances and others, which it is hardly necessary to mention, a meeting of German Protestants was called on the 6th October, 1853, for the purpose of devising such means as would lead to the vocation and the appointment of a resident German Protestant Minister in this city. The result of this and another meeting held in the same month was, that subscriptions were raised among ourselves, a board of Trustees *pro tem.* elected, and invitations sent to a few German Ministers of the Evangelical or Joint-Lutheran and Reformed Church, to fill the ministry about to be founded in this city. The Rev. Mr. Soldan, of Buffalo, answered to our call, and preached a sermon for us in St. Gabriel Street Church, on the 20th November, 1853; and the Rev. Mr. Werner, now our worthy and much beloved Minister, held a sermon on the 5th of February, 1854. Mr. Werner had been recommended to us by the Synod of the State of New York, and was elected our Pastor on a subsequent meeting, to commence his duties on the 1st of May, 1854. As we had no place of worship, we were kindly accommodated by the second Congregational Church, then meeting in Gosford Street for three years, when their place of worship was bought by the Episcopalian Church. We met then with much kindness and liberality from the Trustees of St. Gabriel Street Free Church, who allowed us the gratuitous use of their building on Sunday mornings during the summer of 1857. But winter approaching, we found ourselves again in the predicament, to look out for a suitable place of worship; and it was then, that the plan, to build a small Church, adapted to our simple wants, was formed and resolved upon. I may mention here, that during the year 1854 we had bought an Harmonium to assist our Choir, and that in the same year the act of our incorporation had been passed by the Legislature. We had been already (thanks to the liberality of our Protestant friends speaking the English language) enabled to lay up the sum of \$800, being partly the

result of collections, partly of receipts at the Bazaar we held about Christmas, 1855. Another Bazaar was held in the last week of 1857, which again brought us a net receipt of \$600. We then opened a subscription for the building fund among ourselves, and we found this list at once swelling to about \$1,000, thus making a total of \$2,400. We had now sufficient funds to commence with, and our next business was to find a suitable site. In this, we succeeded far beyond our expectations. Through the Christian liberality of Mrs. Aylwin, the lady of the Hon. Mr. Justice Aylwin, we acquired the ground upon which we are now about to perform the solemn ceremony of laying the Corner Stone, on very favorable terms. The ground was broken on the 24th March, and the Church and parsonage are, according to contract, to be finished by the 1st October next, at a cost of \$5,600. We all look forward to this period with joyful expectation, and we hope, that with the assistance of our Lord, this Church may become a blessing to all those German Protestants, who in future may choose this beautiful and promising country as their adopted fatherland. Thanking you, Christian friends, for the patience with which you have been kind enough to listen to these few remarks, I shall now, according to the order of the programme, call upon the Choir, to sing the first hymn.

The choir of the German congregation here sang Luther's celebrated hymn *Eine feste Burg ist unser Gott*,* after which the Rev. Mr. Werner, Pastor of the congregation, delivered, in the German language, the following prayer and address:

OPENING PRAYER.

O Lord our God and Father, from thee proceedeth every good work whether to will or to do. Blessed be thy name that thou hast worked in the hearts of this congregation to commence the building of a house in which thy holy name should be exalted and thy divine word proclaimed for the healing and comfort of many souls. Be merciful to them, O God; and as thou hast given them the will, be graciously pleased to assist them to the completion of the work. Let the corner stone of this house be laid under thy blessing, and its progress to completion be promoted by thy grace; for except thou build the house, verily they that build it labour in vain. Take, then, under thy fatherly protection the progress of a building which is meant for thy holy sanctuary—as a place where thine honour shall be extolled and thy mighty works shall be declared. Take all that labour at the building under thy providential care: preserve them from danger and disaster; and let the structure be completed with thy gracious aid so that it may stand a worthy temple for thine honor to dwell in. And as we this day pray for thy help and blessing in the building of this earthly house, so would we specially pray that thou wouldst at all times cause this

* Our God is a strong Castle.

congregation to be built up upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ being the chief corner stone, so that through the power of thy Holy Spirit, being linked together in the bond of faith and love, they may become a holy temple and habitation of the Lord. Eternal tri-une God, who can do exceeding and abundantly beyond what we can either ask or think, to thee be honor and glory in the church that is in Christ Jesus for ever and ever. Amen!

ADDRESS.

With joyfully attuned hearts, my beloved brethren we are here assembled for the solemn work of laying the corner stone of a new sanctuary of the Lord—the first German Church ever erected in this populous and flourishing city:—assembled to speak and to hear the words of devotion, on this spot first uttered to-day in the accents of our dear mother-tongue; and with prayer and tuneful praise, and the reading of God's word to consecrate the already begun labour of the building. If every work and undertaking ought to be commenced in the name of the Lord, as the Apostle Paul directs, ("Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father through him,") how much more does it become us to commence with prayer and pious elevation of the heart to God *such* a work as that which assembles us to-day. How sublime—how encouraging for us all is this holy ceremony. It forms a brilliant spot in the history of our little community. That which so long and many a day we have wished for, longed for, prayed for, is now about to go into fulfilment. You yourselves have spared neither exertions nor sacrifice,—*that* I must to-day openly avow to your credit. So much the more confidently may you expect that He who has helped you hitherto will not withdraw His fostering hand for the future. Our English brethren, too, who have so readily and generously assisted us, and to whom in name of you all I now desire to offer our heartfelt thanks, will, I know, continue their kindness, and not allow our hopes and expectations to be blighted.

And truly there is something grand, important, indescribably significant in the erection of a place of worship. For is not the house of God the building-plot upon which we ourselves as lively stones are to be built up into that spiritual house of God whereof Jesus Christ is the head stone of the corner. *That* house is not made with hands; it is the church of believers and saints whom the Son of God hath collected upon earth. Let us direct our eyes towards this true church of the Lord: let us seek *our* edification upon *its* foundation and corner stone: *that* is the most important lesson which the laying the corner stone of a visible house of God can impress upon our hearts. Here every thing is calling to us, "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." Let us then briefly meditate on these words of the Apostle, whilst we contemplate the truth that Jesus Christ is the only true foundation and corner stone of

the Church. We shall endeavour 1st to demonstrate the correctness of the proposition ; and 2nd, to indicate the reflections that naturally flow from it, on the occasion of laying the foundation of a house of God.

1. When Peter made the solemn confession, " Lord, to whom shall we go ? Thou hast the words of eternal life ; and we believe and are sure that thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God ;" the Lord answered, " Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jonas, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say unto thee, thou art Peter, and upon this rock will I build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Thus, our Lord himself will be the foundation of His Church. Faith in Him as the Son of God, shall bear all, pervade all, bind together all. Peter and his fellow-apostles rest immediately upon this foundation-stone, and on them again repose we all, who through their word have become believers. And thus is light thrown upon the Apostle's language, " Ye are built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone, in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth into an holy temple in the Lord." The apostles abode strictly by this ordinance of the Lord. Jesus Christ, his cross and resurrection, formed the sum and substance of their whole preaching : it was upon this that they founded all their doctrines and all their admonitions : it was upon this foundation that they built the Christian Church : it was not man's wisdom, but the grace of God in Christ Jesus, that they proclaimed wherever they appeared as the ambassadors of Christ. And thus it was that their preaching had such a captivating effect, such astonishing results ; it was not human but Divine truth that they had been commissioned to proclaim ! In this consciousness of the truth and divinity of their preaching, they shrunk before no sufferings or afflictions. Not because they preached the doctrine of a Supreme Being,—not because they preached the duty of universal love,—not because of these things did they meet with persecution from the enemies of the Saviour ; but it was the doctrine of Christ crucified which was a stumbling-block to Jews and foolishness to heathens. But for the sake of Jesus Christ they joyfully submitted to every sort of ignominy, testifying only with so much the more steadfastness and zeal that the stone which the builders had rejected was become the head stone of the corner, and that other foundation could no man lay than that which was laid, which was Jesus Christ. That He, the Son of God, came into the world to save sinners, is the cardinal and fundamental truth of the Christian Church, for it is only through it that man can be transformed into a new creature, and his earthly essence be transfigured into a heavenly one. Without Christ, communion with God is unattainable by sinful man ; for no man cometh to the Father but through Him. Without Christ the best sermon remains but human wisdom, void of Divine power to enlighten, to

improve, to comfort, to draw the soul upwards with strength from on high. Without Christ it were scarcely worth while to build a church at all : for, that a God exists, stands ready written on the firmament of Heaven ; and, that we ought to assist and render service to each other, is one of the earliest lessons which maternal love dictates to the playing infant—is a lesson which the trouble of the day is daily teaching to us all. But how, through faith in the fear of God, the sinner finds grace ; how man, by nature estranged and alienated from God, receives the right of sonship ; how in Christ he finds life and the fullness of sufficiency, and in his strength is able to exist even the most blandishing allurements of sin ; that is what it is the office of the church to teach, what must ever be the main subject of Christian instruction, where the Gospel is preached in its purity and truth. And are we not called Evangelical Protestant Christians ? Protestant because we protest against every human addition to the doctrines of faith ; against every falsification of Divine Revelation by man's wisdom or man's delusions. Evangelical, because we regard the Evangel of Christ as the alone foundation of our faith. Forget it not an instant, we cease to be members of this Evangelical Church from the moment we forsake the foundation upon which this Church is built, and which is none other than that which first was laid—Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and forever—the only name given among men by whom they can be saved—noble works of righteousness of our own, but by grace alone, through faith in Him.

2. Applying what had been said to our present solemnity, let us ponder, every one apart, if we too have been building on this right foundation—if our faith and Christianity stands steadfast and immovable on that foundation of the Apostles and prophets, whereof Christ is the chief corner stone. Examine yourself, my beloved brother, if the true foundation for *your* soul's salvation be not still wanting ; consider that, so surely as the temporal house erected by the builder requires a firm foundation on earth, as surely does your faith require a sure and certain foundation, if it is to afford you comfort and peace of mind, assurance of God's grace, strength in the midst of temptation—if it is to enable you to stand firm amidst the tempests of life, and untterrified and calm before the portals of death. This firm security we attain alone through faith in Jesus Christ. O, see then, my beloved brethren, that you become assured of this foundation. It is a delightful thing to have the heart safely anchored. Search, then, the Scriptures, for it is they that testify of Christ ; exercise yourselves in imitating him, for he has left us an example that we should follow his steps ; lead your little ones to him ; seek to implant love to him in their tender hearts, to treasure up for them the incorruptible treasure of heaven, and to train them up to Christian piety by instruction, admonition and example. Let one and all of us, wherever and whenever we can, strive to promote faith in

Christ. O, is there a man that had but once guided a brother to the Lord—to whom one single person is able to say, "Hail to thee, for thou wast the instrument of my soul's salvation!"—surely that man has not lived in vain!

May, then, in our first German Evangelical Church, the corner stone of which we this day lay in the name of the Lord, the Lord's name long be proclaimed in demonstration of the spirit and of power. May many souls be thereby converted to him, and hallowed by him; and may the love of the Lord spread from the spot on which we tread, like a fertilizing stream, over the whole of our little community. These are the wishes that fill our hearts; these the prayers that we this day put up to the Almighty. Hereto thou help us, O Almighty God and Father! Behold, our hopes and the desires of our hearts are before thee. With child-like confidence, we commit them to thy paternal hands. Save now, we beseech thee, O Lord! O Lord, we beseech thee, send now prosperity.—Amen.

The Choir then sung the hymn, *Lobe den Herrn, meine Seele*.*

The Rev. Mr. Werner then proceeded to the place where the stone was ready to be laid, and after reading the passage, Genesis 28, v. 22, and repeating the text, "Unless the Lord build the House, they that build it labor in vain," he took up the vessel, hermetically sealed, containing the names of the reigning Sovereign, of the Governor General, of the Mayor of Montreal, of the Pastor, Elders, and Deacons of the new Church, specimens of the current coin of the realm, and copies of the *Montreal Herald, Gazette, Transcript, Pilot, Advertiser, and Witness*, and placed it in a cavity prepared for it. A tightly fitting plate of brass was adjusted over it, and the mortar distributed with a small silver trowel, which the reverend gentleman held in his hand. The stone was then lowered into its position; and struck three times with a mahogany mallet, wielded by the Rev. Mr. Werner, and decorated, like the trowel, with a blue ribbon.

After striking the stone three times with the mallet, he said: "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen. I lay the corner stone of a building to be here erected and known by the name of the GERMAN EVANGELICAL ST. JOHN'S CHURCH, and to be dedicated to the worship of Almighty God, according to the Confession of the German Lutheran and Reformed Church, by the services of the holy ministry, and to other religious purposes. Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Christ Jesus, God over all, blessed for ever, in whom we have redemption through his blood, and forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace. Amen."

CONCLUDING PRAYER.

The reverend gentleman then offered up the following prayer: Merciful God and father, we thank thee that thou hast been graciously pleased to allow us to commence the erection of a

* Praise the Lord, Oh, my soul.

house to be dedicated to thy service. Bless the work, we pray thee, by thy power and love. May the key-stone, as now the corner-stone, be laid in blessing; and may a faithful congregation soon be here joyfully assembled. Unite them firmer and firmer in the gentle bonds of respect, confidence and love, with the magistrates and their fellow-citizens. Bless this city and all its inhabitants: May they ever seek to do thy holy will, and the blessing will never depart from their midst. Bless and long preserve our royal Sovereign, Queen Victoria: Endow her with the riches of thy grace. Bless the Prince Consort, the Prince of Wales and all the royal house.

The ceremony was then concluded by the choir singing the hymn *Danket dem Herrn.**

The Rev. Dr. Wilkes then made a few brief and appropriate remarks. He said he was glad to see the German Protestants of the city make such a successful effort to establish a place of worship where they could praise God in their own language. He spoke, he was certain, the feelings of the Christian Church of Montreal when he expressed these sentiments; it was pleasant, and the Mayor, who was beside him would endorse the sentiment, as a representative of the citizens, to see established in Montreal a congregation speaking another language; praising God in another of the European tongues. He would call upon the Christians of the city to hail this occasion as a new epoch among their churches; and he would also call upon them to assist their beloved friends of another nationality, in an effective way, so that they might be enabled to complete their church as well as the parsonage, they were erecting for their pastor beside it.

The Rev. Mr. Bonar delivered a short address. He congratulated the German congregation on what they had effected. He was glad to hear the choir sing one of those grand old hymns, by which Luther awoke up Germany, and he hoped that such hymns as this and such prayers as they had heard delivered, would still accompany the worship of God in this Church; and that the Gospel would always be preached inside its walls, in the spirit and language of Luther.

The Rev. Mr. Kemp followed. He was glad to stand there, and look upon what the German congregation had performed. He wished them the highest success, and hoped that the best results might flow from their efforts; and concluded by advising them to make every effort to keep their church free from debt, for it was a sad encumbrance to a place of worship, and he was sure that in this respect they would be seconded by their Protestant friends in the city. He concluded by congratulating them upon the fruits of their Christian zeal and liberality.

The National Anthem was then sung by the choir; the bystanders remaining uncovered.

The proceedings terminated with the benediction, pronounced in German by the Rev. Mr. Werner.

* Thanks be to the Lord.

